DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 433 591 EA 030 000

AUTHOR McPherson, Gregory; Dlamini, Mbali
TITLE Democratic School Governing Bodies in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal: The First Elections. EPU Research Report.
INSTITUTION Natal Univ., Durban (South Africa). Education Policy Unit.
ISBN ISBN-1-86840-269-X
PUB DATE 1998-01-00
NOTE 60p.
AVAILABLE FROM Education Policy Unit, University of Natal, Durban 4041, South Africa; Tel: (031) 260-2607; e-mail: sharman@mtb.und.ac.za
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Democratic Values; Educational Administration; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Governance; *Government Role; *Government School Relationship; *Local Government; *Participative Decision Making
IDENTIFIERS *South Africa (KwaZulu Natal)

ABSTRACT

This document examines the implementation of the Schools Act, which established the democratic governing bodies and the school governance, capacity-building program in KwaZulu-Natal. It is based on a study that: (1) recorded the existence/nonexistence of governing bodies and compiled a profile of the average governing body based on a sample of schools; (2) examined the processes that were followed in setting up school governing bodies in public schools in KwaZulu-Natal; (3) identified problems that arose while establishing governing bodies; and (4) evaluated the immediate/short-term impact and effectiveness of governing body structures in public schools, including the extent to which capacity-building programs were in place. Numerous questions guided the research: To what extent have school governing bodies been established and who are the members? What constraining factors and challenges confronted school principals in the establishment of the first democratic governing bodies? What are stakeholders' perceptions of their roles in school governing bodies? and To what extent are capacity-building programs available and in use? To gather data, two research methods were used: case studies and a survey questionnaire. Included in the findings was the discovery that, in 98 percent of schools, the principal acted as the electoral officer as prescribed by the department. (Contains 23 references. Appendices include interview guides and a survey questionnaire.) (RJM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 433 591

Democratic School Governing Bodies in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal

The First Elections

Gregory McPherson
Mbali Dlamini

EPU Research Report
January 1998

EA 030 000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Karlsson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

The First Elections

EPU Research Report
January 1998

Gregory McPherson
Mbali Dlamini
Education Policy Unit
University of Natal

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

THE FIRST ELECTIONS

Contents **Page**

FOREWORD 1

INTRODUCTION 3

COLLECTION OF DATA 9

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES 11

ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES 20

- Parent Interviews 20
- Learner Interviews 25
- Non-Educator Interviews 27
- Principal Interviews 28
- Educator Interviews 31
- Profile of Governing Bodies 35

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION 38

LIST OF WORKS CITED 44

APPENDICES

- A Interview guideline for case study school visits 46
- B A sample letter sent to circuit superintendents of education and management 50
- C Survey questionnaire sent to schools in KwaZulu-Natal 51
- D Schedule of schools for case studies 55

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS 56

FOREWORD

Since the early 1990s the Education Policy Unit (Natal) played a pro-active role in advocating democratic school governance. This was eventually achieved with the passing of the South African Schools Act in 1996, which generated some sense of accomplishment among those policy analysts who had pursued the democratisation of school governance through the years.

When the Act was implemented in 1997 with the first elections of school governing bodies, the EPU shifted its governance research activities from conceptualisation and advocacy, to monitoring and evaluation. The study reported in this publication is the first investigation within this new context.

In May 1997, departmental officials made claims that successful first elections had been held in more than 90% of schools under the authority of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture. This prompted the EPU to initiate this study to verify this claim. The investigation was not intended to provide an in-depth evaluation and nuanced understanding of the implementation of democratic school governing bodies. It was too early for such a study. Rather, the research aimed to verify departmental claims and to provide a profile of the newly elected governors. In a province with about 5 300 schools, we acknowledge that the study is limited in the sample of schools surveyed, however the conclusions are useful because the EPU is able to confirm claims made by the department and to offer baseline data about school governors for future studies.

Throughout the study the EPU had free access to and was welcomed into schools. Various people made themselves available for interviews. This was made possible by senior managers of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture and we sincerely appreciate their co-operation.

Finally, we extend thanks to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Completion of this investigation and publication of this report would not have been possible without support from SIDA.

Jenni Karlsson
Director

INTRODUCTION

The 1994 elections brought to an end the apartheid era and a Government of National Unity was sworn in. This fledgling government, based on the principles of democracy, equity and redress, was determined to ensure that all structures in South African society (political, economic, social and educational) should reflect these same principles. Hence, the governance of schools, the focus of this research, was to be restructured in keeping with these principles to ensure representation, participation and ownership by all stakeholders within the school community.

The province of KwaZulu-Natal inherited, from the former government, five separate education departments structured along racial lines. These were administered by the House of Assembly (HoA), House of Representatives (HoR), House of Delegates (HoD) and the KwaZulu bantustan.[1]

Authority	Departments
HoA	Department of National Education (DNE) Natal Education Department (NED) Department of Education and Training (DET)
HoR	HoR Department of Education and Culture (DEC)
HoD	HoD Department of Education and Culture (DEC)
KwaZulu bantustan	KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC)

Although each department had its own school ownership, governance and funding structures, the DNE determined norms and standards of governance for the whole country.

Three types of governance structures predominated at school level. These were school committees or management councils (mainly HoR, HoD, DET and KDEC), governing bodies of Model C schools (only HoA), and Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). The PTAs and PTSAs were non-statutory structures in mainly DET schools, with relatively fewer in HoD and HoR schools. They provided the major stakeholders viz. the community, parents, teachers and pupils with the opportunity to introduce participatory and representative governance in schools. These non-statutory governance structures reflected the popular demand for the democratisation of schools characteristic of the past decade, and heralded the present system of school governance.

[1] More information about the former governance structures can be obtained from:
Act No. 47 of 1963 (Coloured Persons Education Act, 1963)
Act No. 61 of 1965 (Indian Education Act, 1965)
Act No. 90 of 1979 (Education and Training Act, 1979)
Act No. 104 of 1986 (Private Schools Act, 1986) House of Assembly
Act No. 70 of 1988 (Education Affairs Act, 1988) House of Assembly

The main features of these separate, but vastly different, school governance structures can be summarised as follows:

House of Assembly

i) Natal Education Department

About 94% of HoA schools were Model C, having a governing body elected by parents with the principal in an *ex-officio* capacity (Department of Education (DoE), 1995:20). Other major stakeholders such as learners, teachers and community interest groups were not represented on Model C governing bodies. Of all the school structures in South Africa, these bodies enjoyed the greatest autonomy and power to influence school policy.

While the state provided teacher salaries, the governing bodies of these state-aided schools were responsible for the maintenance of their school facilities, were empowered by law to determine school policy in matters such as admissions and language policies, and had fiscal and legal powers.

ii) Department of Education and Training

The majority of DET schools were state-aided (DoE, 1995b). In these schools, management councils comprising nine parents, the principal (in an *ex-officio* capacity) and two co-opted members where necessary, were responsible for advising the principal, circuit inspector or director-general on wide-ranging matters including teacher employment and student admissions.

In addition, management councils controlled school funds, supervised school property, decided on steps to be taken regarding student misconduct, and forwarded complaints and representations for the circuit inspector's attention. Admission and language policies fell outside their jurisdiction.

The management councils' powers were largely advisory and consultative, which created an impression of parental participation in the control of education but did not give parents power over anything substantial.

In white controlled rural areas, state-aided farm schools were predominant (DoE, 1995b). At these schools, which were administered by the DET, non-statutory management councils existed with the permission of the farm owner, who had ultimate authority over the school. The management council might comprise the owner (or manager) by him/herself, or a governing body comprising the owner and four elected parents. Farm owners were not obliged by law to establish governing bodies and could disband a governing body at any time. Thus, participation in decision-making by parents at farm schools was not theirs by right. The farm owner had the right to determine admission policies, control and discharge teachers, and to close the school, amongst other things.

House of Representatives: Department of Education and Culture

According to the Coloured Persons Education Act 47 of 1963, each HoR school was required to have a five or seven member committee, depending on the enrolment of the school, elected by the parents. In the case of state-aided schools, committees comprised three parent-elected members and two members appointed by the owners of the school. The school principal served on these committees in an *ex-officio* capacity, and other stakeholders such as teachers, pupils and community organisations were not represented.

In addition to advising the HoR Regional Board, the committee was responsible for the use of school funds and supervising matters directly affecting parents. Direct contact between committee members and teachers was discouraged and 'professional matters' were the concern of the principal and inspectorate. Since the majority of these schools were state schools (HSRC, 1990; DoE, 1995:17), the department paid teacher salaries, provided school supplies and maintained school property. School committees, furthermore, had no input into admission and language policies.

House of Delegates: Department of Education and Culture

Within the framework of the Indian Education Act of 1965, PTAs were legislated in 1991 as compulsory governance structures for every HoD state and state-aided school. These PTAs comprised two teachers and three to nine members (depending on the enrolment of the school) elected by parents, with the principal in an *ex-officio* capacity. In general, PTAs functioned as a link between the community and the school, promoting the school as a community, educational and cultural centre. PTAs only had advisory powers concerning admissions, use of school property, uniforms, duration of the school day, calendar, codes of conduct, extra-mural activities and adult education. They were responsible for submitting annual reports to the head of education, raising funds and assisting in disciplinary cases.

KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture

Legislation originally formulated for the DET and adapted by the KDEC, made provision for school committees in KDEC schools, of which the majority were community schools (DoE, 1995:17). These committees comprised seven parents and the principal in an *ex-officio* capacity. School committee meetings were closed to non-members and their powers and functions, mainly advisory and consultative, were similar to the management councils in DET schools, again with an appearance of parental participation, but denying parents any real power. School committees had no real influence over school policy but were expected to raise funds for new buildings, school maintenance and school running costs.

The number of primary and secondary public schools in the former departments is shown below:

Department	Primary and Secondary Schools in KZN	%
HoA	302	6.14
HoD	506	10.28
HoR	70	1.42
DET	886	18.01
KDEC	3156	64.15
TOTAL	**4920**	**100**

The statistics exclude private, pre-primary, special and other schools.[2]

The aforementioned governance structures were fraught with a plethora of inadequacies and problems, particularly among the DET, KDEC and, to a lesser extent, the HoR and HoD schools. Local communities of these schools demanded equity and redress. They complained about administrative inefficiency, were critical of the poor quality of education in many schools, denounced the inaccessibility of better quality state schools in other group areas, and showed dissatisfaction with the existing classification of schools into so many categories, e.g. state, state-aided, Model C, community and farm schools. Above all, they railed against the weakness and illegitimacy of existent governance structures. These problems led to demands for transformation and the establishment of PTAs and PTSAs during the 1980s should be seen within the context of these demands.

PTSAs found in secondary schools were representative governance structures consisting of parents, teachers and students. PTAs, which comprised parents and teachers, were found in some primary schools. Parent representatives were drawn from the parents of students, guardians of students, and from other community members or community organisations that had a personal stake in education or a particular school. School principals were sometimes involved in an *ex-officio* capacity, sometimes they acted as chairpersons and often they were excluded altogether. Teacher representatives were elected from amongst the school staff or were appointed from existing teacher committees. Student representatives were elected either directly from the student body, or from the Student Representative Council (SRC), the forerunner to the Learner Representative Council (LRC). The rationale behind the establishment of PTSAs was a desire to shift the balance of power away from the customary school committees and management councils to parents, workers, teachers and students (Sithole, 1994:2). The general aims of PTSAs included:

- Furthering the educational aims of the school within the community;
- Instilling a democratic approach to decision-making and problem solving;
- Fund-raising and monitoring the use of school funds (NECC/SACHED, 1992).

By 1994, according to the NECC, there were 2 500 PTSAs and PTAs in existence, most being in the Southern and Eastern Transvaal. The literature is not clear as to the exact number of PTSAs in KwaZulu-Natal. PTSAs had many strengths, and weaknesses that

[2] Supplied by the Centre for Policy and Information, Development Bank of Southern Africa, June 1994.

made organisation and operation problematic.[3] In some instances, they functioned only as crisis committees. However, the establishment of these representative bodies provided the concept and context for the creation of the present school governing bodies.

There were calls for democratic governance structures along the lines of PTAs and PTSAs, to enable ownership and participation by all stakeholders of the school community (African National Congress (ANC), 1995:26; ANC, 1994:6).

In the early 1990s, a number of proposals were made by various groups regarding the formulation of new governance structures:

- The National Party government's Department of National Education, in *Education Renewal Strategy* (ERS) 1991 and 1992;
- *Report of the Natal-KwaZulu Education Working Group*, 1992;
- The NECC, through its *National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), governance and administration: report of the NEPI Governance and Administration Research Group*, 1992;
- The Urban Foundation's Education Policy and System Change Unit (EDUPOL), in its *Education Governance in South Africa* Resource Document Series, 1993;
- The Education Policy Unit (Natal), in a discussion paper entitled *Towards a new structure of governance of schooling*, 1993;
- The ANC through its *Policy framework for education and training*, 1994.

Following the 1994 elections, further reports and submissions gave impetus to the need for a new education system and the need for uniform school governance:

- The DoE with its *White Paper on education and training: first steps to develop a new system*, 1995;
- The DoE through its *Draft education White Paper on the organisation, governance and funding of schools*, 1995;
- The DoE's *Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools*, 1995.

Undoubtedly, these reports and submissions contributed to the passing of the South African Schools Act in 1996, which detailed a new and simple classification of schools with uniform governance structures. Indeed, the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools laid the basis of the School Act's provision for the establishment of school governing bodies. Under this legislation, schools were reclassified into two categories viz. public schools and independent schools. Independent schools are those which are privately owned and whose teachers are not appointed and employed by

[3] For a list of the strengths and weaknesses of PTSAs see Sithole, 1994.

the state. Public schools are funded wholly or largely from state resources and are subject to the state's policies for schooling, including governance.

In addition, under this new legislation, all public schools were compelled to institute the new governance structures within a given period as announced in the Government Gazette. In KwaZulu-Natal, the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for education used the KwaZulu-Natal School Education Act No. 3 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 to provide all public schools in the province with a schedule of regulations for the establishment of school governing bodies. These regulations were promulgated in April 1997. They represent a significant shift, firstly, because the inclusion of constituencies represented on the governing bodies presents an opportunity to infuse the character of school governance with democracy and secondly, because governing bodies now have substantial powers and functions to influence the quality of education at those schools. However, many school communities do not yet have the requisite skills and experience to exercise their new powers. The Schools Act requires provincial departments to facilitate the training of governing bodies for this purpose. This places great responsibility on provincial departments which are themselves experiencing capacity problems.

This study was initiated to monitor and measure the implementation of the Schools Act regarding the setting up of democratic governing bodies and the school governance capacity building programme in KwaZulu-Natal. The specific aims were to:

1. Record the existence/non-existence of governing bodies and to compile a profile of the average governing body, based on a sample of schools;
2. Examine the processes that were followed in setting up school governing bodies in public schools in KwaZulu-Natal;
3. Identify problems that arose while establishing governing bodies;
4. Evaluate the immediate/short-term impact and effectiveness of governing body structures in public schools and the extent to which capacity building programmes were in place.

The following questions served to guide the investigation:

- To what extent have school governing bodies been established and who are the members?
- What constraining factors and challenges confronted school principals in the establishment of the first democratic governing bodies?
- What factors enhanced the establishment of these bodies?
- What are stakeholder perceptions of their roles on school governing bodies?
- To what extent are capacity-building programmes available and in use?

- What lessons can be learnt from the recent establishment of school governance structures?

COLLECTION OF DATA

For education purposes KZNDEC is divided into eight regions with a total public school population of 2 619 783 accommodated in 5 255 public schools (KZNDEC, 1997)

Regions	Public Schools	Learners
Durban North	700	398 934
Durban South	650	394 725
Empangeni	706	371 292
Ladysmith	701	383 129
Pietermaritzburg	646	269 011
Port Shepstone	682	305 675
Ulundi	691	297 629
Vryheid	479	199 388
Provincial Total	**5 255**	**2 619 783**

Source: KZNDEC, 1997

In order to answer the questions relating to the aims of this study and to provide an informed description of governing bodies, it was necessary to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Two research methods were used viz. case studies and a survey questionnaire. The former was conducted at fifteen public schools in the Durban South region while the latter was administered to a sample of 270 public schools throughout KwaZulu-Natal.

In-depth case studies were conducted at 15 schools representative of the range of school types in KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, a large number of schools throughout KwaZulu-Natal was surveyed to ascertain the general development of school governing bodies.

The pilot of the case study provided a preliminary means of identifying essential issues to be investigated in the questionnaire survey. It also provided a qualitative database for analytic descriptions of processes and components and helped in identifying problems that arose during the setting up of governing bodies. Undertaking the fifteen case studies and conducting a questionnaire survey provided sufficient qualitative and quantitative data, which was compared and analysed. The research instruments were designed so that data could reflect the current situation and provide a profile of the governing body. These two approaches, the macro questionnaire and the micro case study, complemented each other, with the former monitoring generalisations and trends and the latter supplying specific examples. This complimentarity enabled a broader and deeper understanding of how democratic governance is being implemented in KwaZulu-Natal.

For the case studies, the investigation was confined to primary and secondary schools in the Durban South region of KwaZulu-Natal. Primary and secondary schools form the majority (91%) of schools in Durban South. Pre-primary, special and other schools were not included because of their small numbers and irregular distribution. Public schools in this region were selected because:

- The region includes examples of schools administered by all former departments.
- The region has examples of secondary and primary schools as well as rural and urban schools.
- The region is geographically compact, thereby saving on travelling distance and time.
- The schools in this region are in closer proximity to the researchers.

The Durban South region is geographically small compared to other regions in the province, yet accommodates 394 725 learners in 650 public schools. Of these, 19 are pre-primary, 423 primary, 181 secondary, 18 combined primary and secondary and 9 are special schools.

For the case studies, the fifteen schools were drawn from:

	Secondary School	**Primary School**
Ex-HoA	1	2
Ex-HoR	1	1
Ex-HoD	1	2
Ex-DET	1	2
Ex-KDEC	2	2

The above table indicates that primary and secondary schools from all former departments of education in KwaZulu-Natal were selected (see Appendix D for schedule of schools for case studies). Furthermore, the selection was sensitive to urban and rural schools, even though there are no truly rural schools in the ex-HoA, ex-HoD and ex-HoR. Instead, the so-called rural schools in these three departments are small-town urban schools. Because the Durban South region contains only two ex-HoR schools, both were selected and the ex-KDEC was allocated one extra case study (a secondary school) because of the larger number of schools from this ex-department.

A structured interview instrument was developed for the case studies (see Appendix A). Similar but different questions were developed for each constituent category on the school governing body viz. parent, principal, educator, learner and non-educator. A pilot study was conducted to test the interview instrument. Certain questions were refined and others added. Permission to conduct case studies in the Durban South region was obtained from the Regional Director, and District Superintendents of Education and Management were duly informed of our intentions (see Appendix B).

The survey questionnaire for KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix C) contained questions that were the same or similar to those used in the case studies. It was administered to a sample of 270 schools in KwaZulu-Natal. This figure represents approximately 5% of the 5 480 schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Schools were selected on a sequential random basis, in intervals of 20, from a catalogue of alphabetically listed schools prepared and provided by KZNDEC.

It should be noted that questionnaires were addressed to and answered by principals. It was anticipated that difficulties regarding time, costs and logistics would have hindered the progress of the study if each component of the governing body was addressed individually.

The response rate for the survey questionnaire was approximately 50%, which is adequate for the purposes of the study. About six questionnaires were returned unopened and marked 'address unknown' which implies that some addresses supplied by the Education Department may have been incorrect. SPSS software was used to code and analyse the data.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Establishment of School Governing Bodies

Principals were asked if school governing bodies were established according to legislation. All responded that they had established school governing bodies in accordance with the Schools Act (1996). From these statistics, it can be safely inferred that school governing bodies have been established at all schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

Date of Establishment of School Governing Body

Principals were asked when the governing bodies had been established. The responses reveal that school governing bodies were not all established at the same time. While the majority (70%) of governing bodies were established in June 1997, three schools established their school governing bodies in January, February and March 1997 respectively. Considering that instructions and guidelines for establishment were sent to schools only in April 1997, it would appear that these three schools were pro-active in their thinking and ready to implement the legislation.

Separate Elections

At the overwhelming majority (98%) of schools, the principal acted as the electoral officer as prescribed by the department. Similarly, as required by the regulations, schools notified stakeholders at least three weeks before the election. At three schools, parents were not notified and this may be attributed to the rural location of some schools, the lack of an

adequate postal service in some areas, or even the possibility that the department's instructions arrived very late, if at all. Nevertheless, this small number is insignificant and does not influence the finding that most parents were timeously notified.

At most schools, separate meetings were held for the election of parents and for the election of educators. However, only 25% of the schools were able to hold a separate meeting for the election of a non-educator representative. The majority (75%) of schools could not do this because there were no non-educators (clerical staff, general assistants etc.) employed at their schools. This is typical of the ex-KDEC and ex-DET schools that have not been allocated support staff and confirms what is known about the skewed funding of apartheid education. Further, it reveals how that legacy continues to impact on the current management and funding of schools.

In more than 99% of the schools there appears to be a high degree of compliance with departmental instructions. This is interpreted as overwhelming grassroots support for the introduction of school governing bodies. While a few schools failed to comply with the regulations, the number is so small that it does not significantly affect the overall picture.

Learner Representative Council (LRC)

According to Section 11 of the South African Schools Act (1996):

> *A representative council of learners at the school must be established at every public school enrolling learners in the eighth grade and higher.*

The LRC thereafter elects one or two members to the governing body, depending on the school's enrolment. Principals were asked if LRCs had been established and how often they meet. Since KwaZulu-Natal has a greater (68%)[4] learner population in primary schools and the sample for the survey questionnaire was randomly selected, it was not surprising that there were more primary than secondary schools in the sample. Consequently, the question about LRCs applied to only 24 out of 102 schools. Of these, responses indicate that at schools with learners in grade 8 and above, LRCs have been established. At these schools, LRCs had held between three and five meetings since their establishment. This may be linked to the number of school governing body meetings held, because learners need to brief their representatives and strategise on important issues before governing body meetings, or report back after meetings.

Composition of the School Governing Body

Principals were asked for information about all components on the governing body. This information was required in order to create a profile of the average governing body.

[4] KZNDEC, 1997.

Parent representation

As mentioned above, separate elections were held for parents to serve on school governing bodies. The number of parent representatives is dependent on learner enrolment and this differs from school to school. It is therefore not meaningful to calculate the average. However, all the schools in the sample complied with the regulation in this respect and parents were adequately represented on the basis of 50% plus one.

Looking more closely at the composition, we found that there was uneven gender representation. There are more male parents (325) than females (198) serving on school governing bodies. However, one school had only female parent representatives and another, only male parents. The trend at most schools is to have both sexes represented on governing bodies with males as the majority.

There is very little evidence of racial integration on school governing bodies. In 94% of the schools the parent component is of one race group. Even on the six governing bodies with a racially mixed parent component, there is still a high level of racial homogeneity. An initial explanation for this might be that it is tokenism. However, there are possibly a number of other reasons:

- Some parents, particularly African parents, live far from schools and have difficulty attending meetings, especially in the evening.
- Some parents feel that principals should manage schools without their help or participation since they are paid to do so.
- Some parents lack the confidence and capacity to serve on public bodies.
- Some parents have not been fully informed about the functions of school governing bodies.
- Some parents were fully informed, but withdrew when they realised the extent of the workload.
- Some parents are simply apathetic about exercising their democratic rights.
- Parents of particular race groups at some integrated schools are using their majority numbers to deliberately exclude African parents from assuming posts on governing bodies.[5]

Whatever the reason, it is hoped that with time the parent component will be elected because of their ability to do a particular job and not because of their race, whether or not they reflect the racial composition of learners.

In situations where the entire learner population and the parent component on the governing body are racially homogenous, one does not anticipate problems. Tensions should not arise over culture, language or religious differences. However, where the learner population is heterogeneous and the parents on the governing body are

[5] Daily News, 20 November 1997.

homogeneous, misunderstandings and problems may be expected. In fact, complaints of this have appeared in newspaper reports.[6] Although democratic elections have been held, some parents have called for proportional representation, which might entrench racial division. Indeed, pandering to these demands would be undemocratic and regressive.

The analysis of responses has also revealed that almost half the parents (48%) serving on governing bodies are unemployed. At first one may be tempted to think that there are 249 parents seeking employment, especially when one considers the present high unemployment rate. On the other hand, this figure may include:

- Parents who retired early in their careers.
- Parents who do not want to work and have the extra time to devote to school affairs.
- Parents who do not have to work and who have an interest in education or a particular school.

Most parents serving on school governing bodies have some level of formal education but this is wide-ranging - from primary to post-graduate qualifications. The responses indicate that on 93% of the governing bodies the entire parent component is literate. This suggests that parents are electing literate people whom they regard as knowledgeable and experienced and who will contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning at the school by serving on the governing bodies. The responses have revealed only one case where the entire parent component on the school governing body has no formal education. This does not imply that the governing body will not be able to function effectively or efficiently, rather that this case is an exception to the rule.

Educator representation

An investigation about educator representation on school governing bodies revealed that:

- All schools in the sample have elected educator representatives;
- Governing bodies of smaller schools have only one educator representative (8%) and larger schools have two (92%);
- On the issue of gender, 34% of schools have only female educator representatives and 18% have only males;
- 48% of the schools are represented by both sexes;
- 82% of the schools have at least one female representative. This includes 6 cases where the sole representative is female.

Overall, the tendency is to have female educator representatives serving on school governing bodies. This is not surprising because of the larger number of primary schools in the sample, which tend to have more female educators.

[6] Daily News, 20 November 1997.

The post level of the educator representative component shows that:

- At 5 schools deputy principals represent educator interests;
- In 23 instances, heads of department are elected;
- At 7 schools principals claim to be educator representatives;
- At most schools (76%) level one educators are the elected representatives.

Firstly, level one educators are expected to make up the bulk of the educator representative component because they are the majority group at schools and many schools in KwaZulu-Natal do not yet have permanently appointed middle management. Educators with teaching experience of 3 to 8 years constitute the majority of these representatives. This indicates a group that is still relatively young. It also suggests that the educator constituency have the confidence to elect long-serving and older educators who may be set in their ways.

According to the School Education Act, No 3 of 1996, a governing body consists of the principal (KZN:2). In other words, the principal of the school is a *de facto* member of the school governing body. He or she is not to be included with the educator representatives. There are separate regulations regarding educator representatives. Principals may trivialise educator concerns when 'representing' educators on the governing body. Election of principals implies that the educator corps at a school may be small and weak. Suspicions that principals are not reporting back correctly or completely are bound to create tensions on the staff. One hopes that educators at these schools have not been denied their rightful representation, and that these principals have referred to themselves as educators in the broader sense when completing the questionnaire. Overall, the sample appears to have complied with regulations regarding educator representation. Specific irregularities that have been noted need to be investigated by the Department.

Non-educator representation

Only 29% of the schools had non-educator representatives. Almost 71% of the schools indicated that these questions were 'not applicable'. The following possibilities may account for this high percentage:

- Many schools do not have support staff;
- Contracted workers at schools are uncertain of their status and whether they can be elected;
- Non-educators are reluctant to serve on the school governing body;
- Non-educators are not informed of their right to representation on the school governing body.

It is to be hoped that the last suggestion is not the actual reason. Nevertheless, the statistics confirm that the non-educator component is poorly represented. Of those elected, most (75%) non-educator representatives are female and most (52%) are employed as clerical assistants or secretaries. Very few non-educator representatives are general assistants. At some schools, the returned questionnaire indicated that the non-educator's occupation was farmer or farm manager, who would be incorrectly representing this component. The danger exists that farmers or farm managers may put their farming interests above those of the school. Incidences of this nature are too small to suggest a trend but they are irregularities that must be corrected.

The analysis of non-educator representatives shows the 'average' non-educator representative to be a white female, employed as a clerical assistant or secretary. As mentioned before, schools serving the African community do not have support staff. With the current emphasis on redeployment of excess staff, it is to be hoped that the lack of support staff will be rectified in the very near future and that more schools will have non-educators on their governing bodies.

The statistics raise interesting questions:

- Is non-educator representation reflective of occupational and class status?
- Is this finding representative across the entire province?

However, answering these questions is beyond the scope of this study. It would appear that, where possible, schools have complied with the regulations regarding non-educator representation, but some issues still need further investigation.

Learner representation

In the randomly selected sample, there were only 24 secondary schools that were thus permitted to have learners represented on the governing body. One school was found to have four learner representatives on the governing body, despite existing legislation that allows a maximum of two. This school's response was therefore not included in the data. An examination of the gender composition reveals that females are outnumbered by about two to one (33 to 15). Learner representatives were in grade 10 (14 learners), grade 11 (12 learners) and the majority in grade 12. This is unfortunate, because grade 12 learners will be leaving school at the end of the year, taking their valuable experience with them. The ages of learner representatives' range from 15 years to 34 years, with the majority found in the 15 to 19 age group. When trying to account for the advanced age of certain learners, it should be understood that some learners come from disadvantaged communities and are often forced to leave school when young and return later when they have accumulated sufficient money to pay for their schooling.

With the exception of the school mentioned above, it seems that most schools have complied with the regulations regarding learner representation.

Functions of the Governing Body

Principals were asked whether leadership, administration, budgeting, planning, policy-making, rubber-stamping decisions and consensus building are functions of the governing body. These questions were asked in an attempt to discover whether governing bodies and principals understand and are clear about their role in the management of schools. While the Schools Act clearly states that 'the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body' and that 'the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal' (South African Schools Act No. 84, 1996), the responses to the questionnaire indicate that there is confusion about roles and overlapping responsibilities.

Most respondents (67%) felt that leadership was a function of the governing body; 19% disagreed and 15% did not answer the question, probably because they did not have an answer. Similarly, 49% of the respondents felt that school administration was a responsibility of the school governing body. When it came to budgeting, planning and policy-making, most respondents agreed that these were functions of the governing body. There were few incorrect responses to the questions on budgeting, planning and policy making and few respondents left these questions unanswered. This demonstrates a better understanding of role functions only because it coincides with the 'correct answer'. When taken together with the other responses, it shows that KZNDEC needs to do more to help governing bodies understand their roles and responsibilities.

A large number of respondents were uncertain about whether the school governing body is simply expected to endorse the principals' decisions. While 13% of the respondents did not answer the question, 42% claimed that school governing bodies are expected to rubber-stamp decisions. Only 45% of the respondents disagreed. The large number of positive responses is alarming because 'rubber-stamping' can lead to friction between principals and governing bodies in the future and means that governing bodies do not think they have real decision-making powers. They perceive power to be located in the principal.

It is possible that principals with persuasive personalities will sway school governing body decisions. This can be avoided because the other components of the governing body outnumber the principal. Capacity building programmes are important to strengthen these other components. Furthermore, having a principal with a persuasive personality is not intrinsically bad because:

- Governing body components may depend on the principals' leadership and guidance.
- Being a persuasive speaker and lobbying for support is part of the democratic process.
- A persuasive personality is a desired attribute in a principal.

The high number of positive responses (77%) to the question on consensus building shows some understanding of democratic processes. However, school governance involves participative democracy where decision-making based on consensus is not always possible.

School Governing Body Meetings

At the time of answering the questionnaire, most governing bodies (88%) had held at least one meeting. Thirteen governing bodies claimed not yet to have met. These thirteen responses were invalidated because the same respondents also claimed to have adopted a constitution and a code of conduct for learners. Evidently, there was some confusion. Since the questions were straightforward, the confusion may be in misunderstanding what a constitution and code of conduct is and that it is not possible to have adopted these without having held a meeting. Such misunderstandings reinforce the need for capacity building programmes.

Respondents were asked to list the issues discussed at governing body meetings. These are ranked here in order of frequency:

- Budgeting and fund-raising
- Constitution
- Code of conduct
- School policy
- Security

Considering the recent financial constraints imposed by the provincial DoE, it is not surprising to find that the issue of budgeting is high on school governing body agendas. Coupled to this issue is the concern about fund-raising for the 1998 school year. As departmental funding to schools declines, schools are at a loss as to how to raise funds and they have indicated that their only alternative is to increase the fees paid by parents.

It is understandable that the next most common issues discussed at school governing body meetings are their constitutions, codes of conduct and school policy. Because they have just recently been established, these are first tasks. In addition, the governing body must submit a copy of its constitution to the Head of Department within 90 days of its election (see the South African Schools Act, Section 18). The above issues are clearly defined as being functions of school governing bodies (see the Schools Act, Section 20) and, given the time limits set by the DoE, they are being treated as a matter of urgency. Almost half the respondents (49%) claimed to have already adopted a constitution. Similarly, almost half the respondents (49%) claimed to have adopted a code of conduct for learners and about 54% have adopted a language policy for their schools.

Regarding security at schools, reports in the media indicate that governing bodies will have to raise their own funds for security systems and security personnel.[7] One can

[7] Mercury, 16 January 1998.

therefore expect the issue of security to be an important item on the agenda at meetings. The prevailing high crime rate and criminals' perception that schools are soft targets means that school security will have to be treated as a priority - simply to protect the meagre material resources possessed by most schools. Furthermore, both learners and educators are at risk because of violence, gangsterism and drug peddling in township schools.[8]

Besides these, governing bodies have discussed a variety of other issues ranging from staffing problems to classroom shortages. It is not the intention of this study to examine each issue in depth, but rather to investigate whether school governing body meetings are being held and to identify their primary concerns.

Capacity Building

Principals were asked whether capacity building programmes had been started at their schools and which areas were covered. If they had not, as yet, been started, then which areas should be covered? The rationale for these questions included the apparent need for capacity building for the various components of school governing bodies. Of the respondents, 45% claimed that capacity building programmes had been conducted, 49% stated that capacity building had not started, 5% did not respond and one response was spoilt. While the survey questionnaire does not reveal who conducted the capacity building programmes, it is evident from the case studies (see below) that principals have informed and trained their own school community about governing body roles.

The above statistics indicate that capacity building programmes have started in KwaZulu-Natal, and that the approach is not uniform or spread evenly throughout the province. The big disadvantage to this kind of approach is that it may entrench differences between advantaged and less advantaged schools. However, if capacity building programmes focus on specific schools as a form of redress then this would be a good approach because the responses indicated that not all governing bodies require capacity building or need the same degree of training.

The success of governing body training should be understood against responses to questions about training needs. Of the schools surveyed, 50% of the respondents saw the need for guidance on meeting procedure. Likewise, 52% requested guidance on record keeping. The question about duties of office bearers revealed that 45% wanted further clarification, 18% felt that they were adequately informed about their duties and 37% did not respond. One respondent replied that the school had no need for capacity building because they had a heritage of having worked with or on school governing bodies. Another respondent felt that capacity building was only required for the learner component. The statistics indicate that there is an equal need for capacity building, both in the administrative functions of governing bodies and training in meeting procedure, which is linked to the practice of democracy.

[8] Sunday Tribune, 16 November 1997

The overall response to questions in this section indicated that there is a need for capacity building programmes but only for some governing bodies, for certain components and only in certain areas.

ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

Parent Interviews

One parent at each of the fifteen schools, in most cases the chairperson of the governing body, was interviewed (See Appendix A for interview instrument).

Establishment of governing bodies
Interviewees were asked whether governing bodies had been established at their schools. They all confirmed that governing bodies had been elected and were functioning. This is noteworthy considering that circulars instructing schools to establish governing bodies were only issued in April 1997.

Problems encountered
When asked if they had encountered any problems when establishing school governing bodies, 13 respondents indicated that they had experienced no problems. Where problems arose the reasons were firstly, reluctance of nominees to stand for election citing reasons of age and workload, and secondly, poor attendance at election meetings. At one school, with an enrolment of over a thousand learners, only about 28 parents attended the election meeting. One interviewee ascribed these problems to general apathy and/or reluctance to participate in and take responsibility for community structures. Respondents claimed that they addressed these problems by lobbying and pressurising key individuals and reminding parents about the deadline for the establishment of the school governing body. The high number of interviewees who indicated that they did not encounter problems suggests that:

- The idea of school governing bodies has generally been well received;
- Parents have taken advantage of the opportunity provided by the Schools Act to participate in school governance.

Enabling factors
Interviewees were asked if there were factors which facilitated the establishment of a school governing body at their school. Most parents mentioned previous experience on structures like PTAs, PTSAs, model C governing bodies, governing councils and school committees. Through these structures parents had gained expertise in the management of schools to a greater or lesser extent. Parents felt that principals had also helped by providing information about the rationale for the establishment of new governing bodies, the difference between the new governing bodies and the old structures, and the whole election procedure. This information was shared through circulars and at meetings. The

co-operation of parents and educators, media coverage of school governance issues, and familiarity with the democratic process resulting from the April 1994 national elections and the local government elections were also mentioned as positive factors which contributed to the successful election of the first democratic governing body at their school. This implies that:

- Principals are conversant with the rationale for establishing governing bodies, their functions and the election procedure;
- Principals can be an effective communication link between the Department and the wider school community;
- Elections of parent representatives have been conducted as prescribed by the departmental regulations.

Parent perceptions of the role of governing bodies
Asked what they regarded as the role of the governing body, interviewees offered a wide range of responses:

- Establish co-operation between the parent community and the school
- Establish a suitable environment for learning
- Maintain standards of teaching and learning
- Select suitable staff
- Fundraise
- Manage finances
- Motivate parents to pay school fees
- Maintain resources
- Encourage parents to participate in school activities
- Solve problems e.g. disciplinary problems

This indicates that parents have some understanding of the functions of the governing body and these coincide with the functions stated in Sections 20 and 21 of the Schools Act. However, some interviewees from disadvantaged communities indicated a desire for capacity building because they were unsure about their role.

The role of parents in school governance
The majority of respondents felt that they had a meaningful role to play on the governing body and mentioned the following examples of their involvement:

- Participation in decision-making
- Participation on the staff selection committee
- Participation in the maintenance of the school building and facilities
- Participation in the management of funds and fund-raising

One parent's excitement about participation illustrates the generally positive response:

Both educators and parents need to work together for the children and the new governing body makes this possible. It has become a very close family. That makes things easier and more comforting for the child.

A few parents, however, expressed doubt about whether their role was meaningful. In this regard, one parent expressed concern about the poor attendance and punctuality of educators.

If we are allowed to sit on the selection (sic) committee, we need to know if Mr Jones whom we appointed comes to school regularly or punctually. However, we cannot question him on his absence.

The perception among some parents that they have less power than educators is isolated and probably uninformed because the Schools Act requires the parent component to have one representative more than the other voting members combined.

Some parents seem to be confusing the functions of the governing body with those of the principal and have failed to realise that the governing body has to work as a team. There is a danger that the parent component may consider itself superior to the other governing body components and ask to monitor educators. This tendency is understandable given their experience on previous structures that only consisted of parents. Such an attitude may lead to tension and conflict unless it is addressed early.

Another doubt concerned the need for the governing body to consult with the department on some issues coupled with a perception of the department's inaccessibility. As one respondent said:

There are issues where the government says they have to do things in consultation with it. Okay they have powers but it should not be in consultation with the department. If the governing body is to play an important role in funding and maintaining the school, [it] should have more powers. Needless to say, it has become very difficult to get hold of the department. If the governing body wants to consult the department about something, it will have a major problem.

Attitudes and perceptions concerning accountability and co-ordination need to be strengthened through capacity building programmes.

Capacity building and training

According to Section 19 of the South African Schools Act, the provincial department must offer a programme of introductory and sustained training for newly elected governing bodies. This will enable them to perform their functions effectively. Interviewees were asked if they saw a need for the enhancement of their capacity through training and whether they had received any training. If so, they were asked about the training but if not, they were asked to identify their areas of need.

Most interviewees responded that there was a need for training in view of the recent establishment of governing bodies. Training would ensure clarity of roles and effective participation among stakeholders. A few respondents, mainly from the former HoD and NED schools, claimed that they had no need for training and that explicit documented guidelines would suffice. Two reasons were cited:

- They already had experience since most of the people elected had served on the former school governance structures;
- Their elected representatives were highly qualified.

One interviewee suggested that capacity building was necessary for members who had never served on previous school governance structures, including non-educators. To these interviewees the new governing bodies seemed simply a matter of 'pouring new wine into old bottles', the only difference being the inclusion of the non-educators, educators and learners.

It is understandable that the majority of parent respondents realises the need for training in view of the challenging functions of the governing body.

> *It takes time and training to build the capacity of governance to enable them to sustain or challenge practices and influence policy makers. This is particularly so where local government [of schools] is contemplated in areas which were previously marginalised and underprivileged* (Coombe and Godden, 1996:22).

In general, training for governing bodies has not yet begun. One interviewee, however, had attended a workshop on financial management organised by an NGO. A few schools had received written guidelines for drafting a constitution and a code of conduct. This lack of training is a concern since the majority of interviewees indicated a need for capacity building which would enable them to perform their functions effectively. The following areas of training to be provided by the department were identified:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Understanding the objectives and functions of governing bodies
- Understanding the role of the governing body
- Understanding the curriculum
- Understanding the South African Schools Act, the White Paper on Education and Training and the organisational structure of the Department

Skills and competencies:

- Meeting procedures
- Drafting a code of conduct for learners
- Drafting a constitution
- Forming relationships between the various stakeholders

The above list represents some key needs of governing bodies. Failure to provide adequate capacity building in these areas will render governing bodies ineffective. This will lead to a lack of credibility in the community, and eventually to the demise of governing bodies.

Activities of the governing body

Certain questions were asked to determine if the governing bodies were performing their functions as specified in Section 20 of the Schools Act. Governing bodies are expected to meet at least once a term. To determine if this was happening interviewees were asked if they had held any meetings. All indicated that two or three meetings had been held, and that there was a schedule for future meetings. All interviewees indicated that their governing bodies had elected office bearers. Meetings have been held more frequently than required, probably because governing bodies are new and various committees have to be set up. In addition, governing bodies require more meetings in order to draft a constitution and a code of conduct. A copy of this constitution must be submitted to the Head of Department within ninety days of the formation of the governing body.

Asked if they had adopted a constitution, most interviewees (87%) indicated that this was in progress. They claimed that a draft had been prepared and was awaiting discussion and adoption. Some governing bodies worked on the constitution with other governing bodies as a group effort, for mutual support. Some governing bodies had formed associations with others with the aim of discussing common issues and solving common problems. Some interviewees indicated that these new structures or partnerships were addressing the issue of government funding of schools. Thus, school governing bodies are taking their responsibilities seriously and are taking advantage of the provision in Section 20 of the Schools Act to work in partnership. These initiatives show strength in the absence of the promised capacity building.

More than half the parents claimed that their governing body had adopted a code of conduct for learners, while others were still working on it as individual governing bodies or in groups. All respondents confirmed that minutes of meetings were kept and copies were circulated. A few interviewees claimed that minutes were kept in bound books open to inspection by all stakeholders, and that the minutes were read at the beginning of each meeting. Again, this confirms that they are taking their duties seriously and, where they have felt inadequate, they have solicited the assistance of their colleagues.

To find out about accountability of members to their constituencies, interviewees were asked how the general parent community got to know about decisions taken by the governing body. A variety of responses was received. The majority indicated that decisions were communicated at general meetings, through circulars and newsletters sent home with learners. Some pointed out that before the general meetings, parents were informed of the dates of future meetings and their mandate and guidance on issues of concern was solicited. This indicates accountability to their constituency and a commitment to consultation.

Further, the 90-day deadline given for the adoption of the constitution and code of conduct is being met. Overall, regardless of the fact that there has been no capacity building, governing bodies are attempting to perform their tasks and work in partnership to support one another.

In an open question requesting interviewees to comment generally about the new governing bodies, most respondents were happy about the way they were operating. They expressed optimism about the future of governing bodies as a vehicle for establishing co-operation between the various stakeholders in the school community and linkages between the school, the community and the state. One interviewee hoped that the partnership exemplified in the governing body might encourage co-operation in the community. This was captured in his statement:

> *The school governing body enables us all to work together for the benefit of the learners. This is what we are aiming for. We want to see our children excelling at the end of the day. We also want to see a bunch of happy teachers. At the end of the day this wonderful atmosphere will extend to the whole community.*

Some interviewees, however, reiterated their discontent about the decision of the DoE to cut funding 'and put a heavy financial burden on the governing bodies'. One interviewee asserted that 'the government was expecting too much too early' and that the financial cutbacks should have been phased in gradually because 'most governing bodies are not familiar with financial management and do not have the managerial skills to handle the maintenance of their schools effectively'. An interviewee from a disadvantaged community indicated that, although they valued being involved in school governance, they were more concerned that the DoE should provide sufficient funding for the maintenance of schools. It was argued that this was necessary because many parents were unemployed and could not afford to pay school fees.

Learner Interviews

In the sample of 6 secondary schools only 5 had learners represented on the governing body. The explanation given by the principal for the governing body without learner representatives was that the school only had classes up to grade 10. The principal was of the opinion that only 12 learners could be elected to the governing body. Consequently, at this school there was no LRC and no learner representation on the governing body. This situation is in contravention of the Schools Act which states that LRCs must be established in secondary schools and learners from grade 8 can be elected to the governing body (see South African Schools Act, Section 11).

Establishment of governing bodies

Learner representatives confirmed that these were in place and that they had been established democratically. Learners claimed that they had not encountered any problems in the establishment of governing bodies. Some interviewees felt that principals had

facilitated the process by providing information about why and how governing bodies would be established.

Problems encountered
The majority of interviewees indicated that they had not encountered any problems in the establishment of governing bodies. One respondent cited poor attendance and late arrival at meetings as problems. Clearly, these matters can be addressed by the governing body.

Enabling factors
Most interviewees felt that information shared via circulars, and an explanation by the principal of the purpose, functions and the procedure to be followed in establishing governing bodies had helped to facilitate the election process. Good planning and organisation, familiarity with the democratic process, past experience on structures such as PTAs/PTSAs, governing councils and school committees, as well as harmony between the various stakeholders, were also mentioned as facilitating factors.

Capacity building and training
All interviewees indicated that, to date, there had been no capacity building for governing body members. They further indicated that there was a need for this since it was their first experience with governance and they lacked the necessary skills for effective participation. They identified the following specific needs:

- Learning about meeting procedures
- Drafting a constitution and code of conduct
- Clarification of roles
- Correct record keeping
- How to manage finances and fund-raising

It is coincidental that parents also listed these as areas of concern.

Activities of governing bodies
Learner representatives indicated that office bearers had been elected and meetings had been held regularly. Minutes had been recorded and circulated or had been written in minute books and read at the beginning of each meeting. Concerning the adoption of a code of conduct for learners, most reported that they were still working on this. A few governing bodies had already adopted a code of conduct with acceptance from the majority of learners at the school. Troublesome learners were cited as being the ones reluctant to accept the code of conduct.

LRC meetings, to report back to their members, are held soon after governing body meetings. One LRC keeps an attendance register and notes class representatives that do not attend. This information is then personally conveyed to the errant classes.

Non-Educator Interviews

Only 12 schools in the sample of 15 schools from the Durban South region had non-educator representatives.

Establishment of the governing body
All interviewees confirmed that governing bodies had been established and that they had been elected democratically as per departmental regulations. It became evident, however, that there was no common understanding of the term 'non-educator'. At some schools, cleaners and security guards of firms contracted by the Department were not regarded as non-educators and had been excluded from the election, but at other schools, these contracted workers were included and available for election as non-educator representatives on the governing body. The department must provide an unambiguous definition for the non-educator constituency so that disparities across schools are avoided.

The role of non-educators in school governance
Non-educator representatives were asked about their role on the governing body. While most agreed that this was essentially to represent non-educators and put forward non-educator problems and concerns, a few conflicting views emerged. For some, there was excitement about being included on the governing body:

> *I think I will play an important role with regard to student discipline because, I am closer to them [the learners] than the teachers. I often see them doing wrong things whilst teachers do not see them. Now that I am part of the governing body I am able to talk to them [the learners].*

In addition, doubt was expressed about the rationale for their inclusion. It was felt that most issues discussed at meetings were of an academic and/or financial nature. As far as they were concerned, this had very little to do with them:

> *I don't see the real need for a non-educator to be on the governing body. Why I say this is because when it comes to meetings it's not so much the discussion part of non-educators [non-educator issues] that is brought [discussed] at the meeting...*

One respondent, a semi-literate Zulu-speaking general assistant on an all-white governing body, expressed frustration by what he regarded as irrelevant issues and the language used in meetings. He said he could not follow most of the proceedings even though the principal, not very conversant in Zulu, tried to interpret for him.

Capacity building
Most non-educators expressed the need for workshops and training to be held in order for them to obtain clarity about their roles. All indicated that such programmes had not yet started. They wanted the following matters to be included:

- Staff selection procedures
- Learner disciplinary procedures
- Fund raising

Activities of governing bodies
All non-educator representatives indicated that governing body meetings were being held regularly and that office bearers had been elected. In most schools (75%), the drafting of a constitution is in progress. One school has already adopted a constitution and at another school, a start has yet to be made. Two of the twelve non-educator representatives indicated that they did not know whether a start on a constitution had been made. Minutes of meetings are being recorded and all claimed that they were receiving copies. At some schools, the minutes were being read and approved at the beginning of the meeting.

Representatives were reporting to their colleagues, usually in an informal manner. However, their main problem had been a lack of interest because most issues discussed at governing body meetings did not affect them directly. One interviewee indicated that his problem concerned the language used. Because his understanding of English is limited, he had been unable to follow discussions and could not interpret the documents given to him. None of his colleagues, also general assistants, were in a position to assist him. Ironically, this representative was under the mistaken impression that he represented general assistants only, and not the clerical staff, who could have helped. To him, therefore, the exercise of attending governing body meetings was futile.

Principal Interviews

Establishment of governing bodies
All fifteen principals confirmed that governing bodies had been established and that the election process had been democratic.

Problems encountered
Eight principals claimed that they had not encountered any problems and the others stated that their two most pressing problems were:

- Poor attendance at the parent election meeting (regardless of the fact that they had been informed timeously) and
- Reluctance to stand for election.

Principals ascribed the latter problem to feelings of insecurity and lack of appreciation for the importance of parental involvement in the education. One interviewee expressed her frustration in the following manner:

> *I have almost a thousand children [enrolled at my school] and out of that only 28 [parents] came to vote. I think this shows that people are not sure of themselves or taking things for granted. I think they don't understand how important their involvement in the education of their children is... because we have been in a*

> *situation where the school did every thing for the community. Now the responsibility has shifted a bit to the community ... they still need to be 'cultured' into it.*

Enabling factors
It emerged that experience on previous governance structures and information sharing with the principal, superintendents of education and colleagues at former model C schools, had facilitated the process of establishing governing bodies

Principal's role on the governing body
All principals felt they had an important role to play since they are responsible for the day to day management of the school. They have to give input to the governing body about professional matters and the needs of the school. Together with the governing body, principals have to maintain standards by selecting appropriate staff, using finances effectively and instilling proper discipline. Principals in disadvantaged communities felt they had to provide a lot of guidance and motivation because most parents were semi-literate. Parent representatives on the governing body relied heavily on the principal's leadership when making decisions about the school

Capacity building and training
The majority (87%) of interviewees was in favour of capacity building in view of the fact that governing bodies are new structures. Two principals felt that in the absence of workshops, clear and well-documented guidelines from the Department would suffice. One interviewee said:

> *I would like to see more communication from the department. If we are given clear guidelines I believe we are intelligent enough to understand them and to work through them on our own.*

All indicated that there had been no training for governing bodies as yet. Three principals had attended a mini-workshop for principals, conducted by a superintendent of education, who guided them through the election procedures and explained the criteria for determining school fees. One principal had been invited to a school governing body meeting conducted by a non-government organisation. However, those that principals feel need training, viz. parents, non-educators and learners, have not yet been included

Principals identified the following areas of competence that need to be addressed:

- Role clarification and functions
- Budgeting and fundraising
- Team work
- Drafting a constitution
- Drafting a code of conduct
- Creating good relationships between the governing body and educators

Activities of the governing body

All interviewees indicated that at least two meetings had been held and office bearers had been elected at the first meeting.

The majority (80%) of interviewees stated that they were still drafting constitutions. Some had received guidelines from the department while some were working in groups to assist one another. One interviewee claimed that the department had supplied the constitution. It is possible that she may have mistaken the guidelines for a constitution.

Similarly, most schools (67%) were still working on a code of conduct. Four schools have adopted a code of conduct for learners and one principal is awaiting guidelines from the Department. One interviewee felt that the deadline for the completion of the constitution and the code of conduct was unreasonable because compiling meaningful and enduring documents is a time consuming process.

According to most interviewees, minutes of the governing body meetings are recorded and circulated, except in a few cases where minute books are used. Most interviewees were not willing to provide the research team with copies of minutes, since they regarded them as confidential. From the minutes that were read, it was evident that meetings have been conducted in an orderly manner following a prescribed agenda. Most agendas included the following matters:

- Incoming and outgoing correspondence
- Finance and fundraising
- Reports by the principal and sub committees
- Forthcoming school functions
- School maintenance
- Disciplinary cases
- Drafting the constitution
- Changes to code of conduct
- School security

Some interviewees (27%) were not satisfied with the new governing bodies even though they see them as better governance structures than their forerunners. They agreed that governing bodies are more legitimate, democratic and transparent than previous structures had been in that they include all stakeholders and provide a forum for input from different perspectives. Some reservations about governing bodies were expressed:

- *We are so used to taking instructions from whites, how are we going to decide for ourselves?*
- *I am not sure how to handle the presence of learners at governing body meetings.*
- *Superintendents need clarity about their role, rather their lack of a role, on the governing bodies.*

- *Everything was so rushed.*
- *The more parents get to understand their role, the greater is their fear.*
- *Where is the training?*

Some interviewees expressed concern about the 'rush in giving responsibility to governing bodies for the maintenance of schools' because they lack experience in handling these matters. There was also concern about governing body members being part of educator selection committees. The authoritarian interference of some superintendents was another matter of concern. Section 23 of the Schools Act describes the membership of governing bodies and it excludes superintendents. This kind of authoritarian attitude is a carry-over from the past and is contradictory to the notion of participatory democracy underpinning school governance. One superintendent is alleged to have instructed the governing body never to take decisions without consulting him. It is understandable that one interviewee believed that this would undermine the governing body's authority and dampen its enthusiasm.

Educator Interviews

Establishment of governing bodies
All educator representatives were unanimous that school governing bodies had been established according to departmental regulations and that elections had been democratic and fair.

Problems encountered
On a more general note, most respondents (67%) reported that there had been no problems with any of the elections. This was particularly true of ex-HoA and ex-HoD schools. As one educator put it:

> *We have had school governing bodies for a little while now. We have a culture of school governing bodies.*

Elections at other schools were characterised by poor parent turnout and educators are concerned about this:

- *The poor response by parents was worrying.*
- *I was a bit perturbed about the response from parents in terms of their actual interest. I found them quite apathetic.*
- *Getting nominations was a problem.*

Enabling factors
Educator representatives at most schools attribute the success of elections to:

- The influential role of principals in explaining electoral procedures to the various components.
- A previous culture of school governing bodies especially in ex-HoA schools.
- The preparatory work done by NGOs and trade unions, particularly SADTU, in training their members to serve on civic and educational structures.
- The clarity of the Department's instructions.

The role of educators in school governance

The majority (93%) of educator representatives see themselves acting as a liaison between educators and the school governing body or as a link between educators and parents. The educator representatives view their role as:

- Representing the interests of their colleagues.
- Making the governing body aware of educators' perceptions.
- Bringing educator problems to the attention of the school governing body.

The only exception to this trend was from one educator representative who felt that his task was to 'guide' and 'direct' the parent component, which he felt was essentially illiterate, on issues such as budgeting, fundraising and bookkeeping. This patronising attitude does not significantly affect the overall picture that educator representatives have of their functions. However, if viewed more positively, it does indicate a willingness to assist parents in making school governing bodies work.

Educator representatives at all 15 schools indicated that their colleagues viewed their role as very important. They are seen as representatives of the educator corps, as participants in effective decision-making and as conveyors of educator problems to the school governing body. However, what emerges strongly in all the interviews is the fact that, for the first time, educators have a voice in the management of the school. Some educator representatives caucus with their colleagues before school governing body meetings and report backs are given the following day.

Some educator representatives said that a maximum of two educator representatives on the governing body was sufficient. Because school governing bodies are still in a formative stage and no contentious issues have arisen as yet, educator representation is not an issue. One educator representative felt that part of the democratic process involved lobbying and persuading other participants on the governing body to vote in a particular way. Another felt satisfied with the present representation but believed that 'it should be increased as the learner enrolment grows'. This argument implies proportional representation, which brings with it problems of a different nature.

Nevertheless, the majority of the representatives (53%) argued that educators are inadequately represented. Comments made by these representatives reflect their misgivings and include:

- A demand for equal representation of parents and educators.

- The claim that larger educator representation will mean greater and better input at meetings.
- The belief that educators understand education matters better than parents and should therefore be in the majority.
- The fear that the Schools Act gives parents one extra vote to override contribution or participation of educators.
- The fear that parents may practice nepotism on staff selection committees.

Capacity building and training

At the time of the study, only one respondent confirmed that the Education Department had organised a training session for governing bodies. All other representatives responded negatively. However, two educator representatives had attended workshops held by their teacher organisations viz. the Association for Professional Educators in KwaZulu-Natal (APEK) and the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU).

Educator representatives from some ex-HoA, ex-HoD ex-HoR schools felt that there was no need for capacity building because they had experience and the parent component consisted of 'competent people who are professionals in their own right. They are on top of their jobs and are doing a good job on the school governing body'.

However, these schools were in the minority. Other educator representatives, particularly from the ex-DET and ex-KDEC schools, felt strongly that there was a need for capacity building. One educator representative suggested that the Department had a hidden agenda and that it was not being totally honest about governing bodies: 'I don't think the full affairs [implications] have been laid down to us'. Educator representatives felt that there was a need for greater clarity regarding functions and roles. They suggested training in meeting procedure because parents, educators and learners are not familiar with this. They wanted more information on 'basic school management' including financial management. They requested training in resolving disputes between principal and parents, principal and educators, and educators and learners.

Some educator representatives were more specific and mentioned:

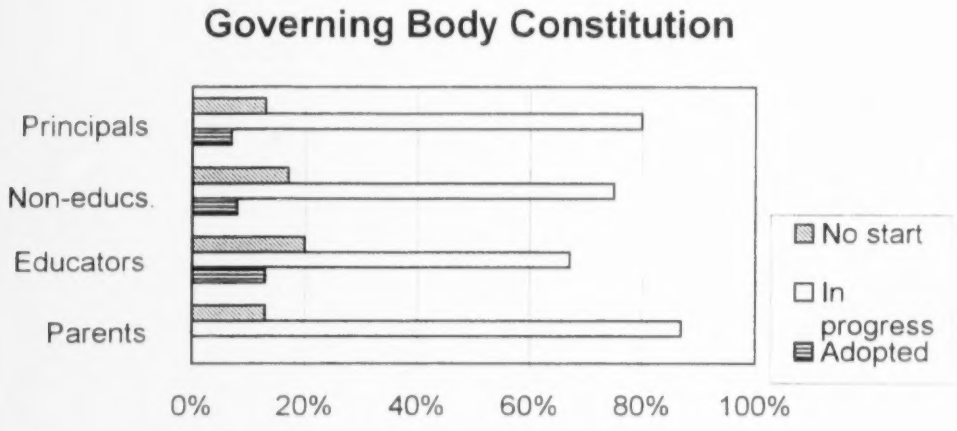
- *How to make a mission statement: some parents don't even know what a mission statement is.*
- *Writing minutes, keeping records, problem solving, drawing up a constitution and a code of conduct and budgeting.*

Clearly, training is needed, but most agreed that it should be targeted at those schools where the need is greatest and not simply executed as an overall exercise.

Activities of governing bodies

Educator representatives at all schools confirmed that governing body meetings are being held and office bearers have been elected. While school governing bodies are expected to meet at least once per term, most schools have held more meetings because of the need to 'get the ball rolling'. The number of meetings held range from 'at least two' to 'about eight'.

Most representatives (67%) interviewed indicated that they are still in the process of drafting a constitution or have drafted one and submitted it to the school governing body for ratification and adoption.



The above chart illustrates graphically that most governing bodies have not yet adopted a constitution. Although minor differences are evident, all components agree that they are in the process of drafting a constitution. At one school the educator representative was unaware of the constitution and at two schools no attempt had been made to draw up a constitution because 'nobody knows how to draw it'. At two schools constitutions have been drafted, ratified and approved. These two schools are an urban primary and a rural secondary school. This point is made because there is no discernible difference in the ability of urban schools, with greater access to resources, to draft a constitution sooner than rural schools.

The chart also indicates that, while the other components are aware of a constitution having been adopted, the parent component is not. This lack of information on the parents' part is difficult to explain. It may be that information about the constitution has been deliberately kept away from the parent component or that the difficult task of drafting a constitution is being tackled by others, with the completed product being handed over to the governing body for ratification and adoption.

Similarly, the responses to the questions about the code of conduct for learners display the same trend. The DoE has belatedly published guidelines for school governing bodies

containing examples of a constitution and a code of conduct. This ought to hasten the adoption of these documents.

Although requests for training in recording minutes of meetings were made by educator representatives, all fifteen schools indicated that minutes are being recorded and that each member of the school governing body receives a copy. The schools vary in the manner in which minutes of meetings are distributed and some schools circularise minutes to the entire school staff.

Schools use different methods to inform educators about school governing body decisions. These include staff meetings chaired by the principal, formal report-back meetings chaired by the educator representative, circulars of important decisions and printed copies of minutes for each educator. One school had not yet had a report-back to educators. In most cases, every effort is being made to keep educators informed about governing body proceedings.

Profile of Governing Bodies[9]

It is useful to establish a profile of school governing bodies, to identify gender and racial composition, levels of education and other characteristics. Historically, disadvantaged race groups have been forced to accept that people from a different race group would represent them. Similarly, females have been treated deferentially in certain cultures. It will be useful to see the pattern that emerges in a democratic society where race and gender are not deciding factors.

i) Parent representatives

- Although parent representation on governing bodies is predominantly male, there is some (47%) female representation. At one school, the entire parent component is female.
- Although the enrolment of learners in some former HoD and HoA schools is almost 40% African, none of the parent representatives are African.
- Regarding the question of employment, 77% of parent representatives are employed or self-employed. The number of unemployed parents in the sample could impact on future decisions about school fees and their collection if these parent representatives cannot afford to pay fees. Almost every school has increased school fees in 1998 and some have set up aggressive fee collection strategies to offset provincial cuts in school funding. With a significant number of unemployed parent representatives on these school governing bodies there may be a softening of attitudes and more flexibility and/or accommodation on incidences of non-payment.
- It was not easy to obtain information about the level of education of parent representatives. However, there is evidence that most of the parent representatives in

[9] The following summary is based on case studies of 15 schools and excludes the findings of the survey questionnaire.

the former HoD and HoA schools are highly qualified. This accounts for their assumption (mentioned above) that they do not need training. In the former DEC and DET schools, the majority of parent representatives have only a primary school education. This corresponds to their expressed need for capacity building to ensure greater efficiency.

ii) Learner representatives

- It would seem that learner representatives on the governing body are predominantly male since only 20% of the learner representatives interviewed were female.
- It is interesting to note that there were no African learner representatives on the governing bodies of former HoD, HoR, and HoA schools, even though these now have about 40% African learners. This is possibly because these schools continue to be identified as Indian, coloured and white, respectively.
- The learner representatives that were interviewed were mainly from grades 11 and 12, and their average age was 17. The advantage of electing senior learners to the governing body is that they probably have a greater sense of responsibility and are relatively more mature. Conversely, the experience gained by these learners will be lost to the school when the grade 12s matriculate. When asked to comment about their participation on governing bodies, all the representatives were positive and expressed excitement. They regard their positions as very important and informative, especially regarding the management of finances. They believe that they are pioneers who still have much to learn before being able to make a meaningful contribution to the functioning of governing bodies.

iii) Non-educator representatives

- The case studies revealed that most non-educator representatives are female (58%) and secretaries (67%). A few (25%) are male general assistants or security guards. One interviewee was a boarding master.
- In the former HoR, HoD and HoA schools, regardless of the greater number of African non-educators, only one school had an African non-educator representative on the governing body. Reasons for this may be that:
  a) African non-educators are reluctant to be elected because they have difficulty attending evening and/or Saturday meetings.
  b) They have transport problems because they reside far from the school.
  c) Both parents work away from home.
  d) They are untrained in participatory democracy and lack self-confidence.
  e) They are disinterested in school matters.

iv) Educator representatives

At all fifteen schools educators were represented by the maximum number allowed.

- Males tend to dominate as educator representatives. Secondary schools tend to have more male representatives and in four schools both representatives were males. Primary schools tend to show a gender balance even though there is a preponderance of female teachers. Overall, 47% of the schools are represented by both sexes.
- An examination of responses reveals that the composition of educator representation is racially homogenous. Although the learner enrolment is racially mixed in 53% of the schools, the educators are still racially homogenous to a large extent and this explains the homogeneity. With time, and possibly with educator redeployment, this will change.
- An unusual tendency emerges when the rank of educator representatives is examined. In ex-HoA schools most representatives (83%) occupy management positions. In ex-DET and ex-KDEC schools most educator representatives (86%) are post level one educators. One can speculate over the reasons for this. Former DET and KDEC schools may view people in management positions negatively and suspect them of siding with the authorities in education. Thus, 'management' may not represent educators satisfactorily. On the other hand, educators in former HoA schools appear to have greater confidence in people in management positions and entrust them with educator matters.

Although interviews were conducted individually, all stakeholders concurred on certain issues.

- School governing bodies have been established and the election process was democratic.
- Elections went smoothly without any major problems.
- There is a need for capacity building.
- Much confusion exists about the function of the governing body.
- Representatives on the governing body are unclear about their particular role and function.

This consensus indicates the seriousness of these problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

An analysis of the case study and questionnaire data indicates that the aims of this study have been achieved. Similar findings of the case studies and the survey questionnaires were expected. However, the following comparative table about the composition of governing bodies indicates differences in some instances:

	Survey questionnaire	Case studies
Parent Representatives		
Gender	62% male	57% male
Employed/ self-employed	48%	77%
Racial homogeneity	94%	100%
Learner Representatives		
Gender	67% male	80% male
Grade 12	54%	67%
Average age	19 years	17 years
Non-educator Representatives		
Gender	75% female	58% female
Secretaries & clerical staff	52%	67%
Educator Representatives		
Gender	48% male & female	47% male & female
Post level 1	76%	86%

The differences are attributed to two reasons:

i) The survey questionnaire was filled in by the respondents and not mediated by the researchers. Thus answering of the questionnaire was controlled by the respondent. He/she may have read all the questions before completing any, may have completed and returned the questionnaire at a time convenient to himself/herself, may have supplied false information, or failed to complete the questionnaire at all.

The case study interview questions, although they may be similar in format to the survey questionnaire, are presented and controlled by the interviewer. Although the respondent may have declined to answer particular questions or supplied incorrect information, nevertheless control over the research encounter remained with the interviewer. The presence and mediation of the interviewer can affect the responses in that respondents may say what they think the interviewer wants to hear. For this reason we assume that the survey is more reliable for statistical data.

ii) The sample size between the case studies and the survey differs. Although the case studies provided greater qualitative data, the survey of 102 schools provides a sample for greater generalisability.

Aim 1: To measure the existence/non-existence of governing bodies and to compile a profile of the average governing body

In May 1997, the head of KwaZulu-Natal's governance training unit claimed that over 90% of the schools in the province had established governing bodies.[10] The analysis of the case studies and survey questionnaire data confirms this and indicates that school governing bodies have been democratically constituted.

A brief description of the composition of school governing body members reveals that:

- There are more male parent representatives than female, particularly in secondary schools.
- Parents tend to nominate academically qualified persons or people who have been exposed to meeting procedures and trade union activity to represent them.
- Parent representatives, particularly at schools serving disadvantaged communities, tend to have only a basic primary education and in a few cases have no education at all. Many of the semi-literate parents depend on the principal for guidance. This practice is undesirable and may lead to distrust and friction between parents and the principal.
- The parent component of governing bodies tends to be racially exclusive and this is not truly reflective of the school learners enrolled at the school.
- Racial exclusivity is also evident among educator representation and learner representation.
- In ex-HoA schools, the educator representative normally occupies a management position. This may imply that Post Level 1 educators have greater confidence in middle and senior management.
- In ex-DET and ex-KDEC, schools most educator representatives are Level One educators. This may imply distrust of middle and senior management.
- Most schools have the maximum of two educator representatives, with men predominating over women by 2 to 1.
- The school secretary or administrative clerk tends to be the non-educator representative on governing bodies at most ex-HoA, ex-HoD and ex-HoR schools.
- Most ex-KDEC and ex-DET schools have no non-educator representative, reflecting the absence of support staff at these schools.

[10] Dr Mike Lotter made this claim at a public seminar organised by the Education Policy Unit on 20 May 1997 and held at the Umlazi Campus of the University of Zululand.

Current legislation indicates that non-educators are 'members of the staff at the school who are not educators' (South African Schools Act, Section 23). This definition is vague and is cause for concern. The research shows that there is no common interpretation of the term 'non-educator'. At certain schools, contracted workers (general assistants and security personnel) are elected to the governing body, and at other schools they are excluded from the process. Clarification of the above term would help to demystify it and ensure uniformity in practice.

There seem to be mixed feelings regarding the inclusion of non-educators on governing bodies. Certain non-educator representatives are excited about being on the governing body, while others are disillusioned because the issues discussed are irrelevant and inaccessible to them. This indicates a lack of understanding of the role of the non-educator representative in democratic school governance. Non-educators are not on the governing body for the sole purpose of representing their colleagues, but also to participate in decision-making for the benefit of the whole school and the community at large. Clearly, there is a need for capacity building around the greater participation of non-educators and an elucidation of their role for their benefit, as well as for the benefit of all the other members.

This study found that LRCs have been established at most schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Although elections have been conducted democratically, female learner representatives tend to be outnumbered by male learners by two to one. Learner representatives show a keen interest in participating on governing bodies and have expressed the need for capacity building. Principals are in support of requests from non-educators and learners for capacity building.

Aim 2: To examine the process of setting up school governing bodies in public schools in KwaZulu-Natal
Aim 3: To identify and evaluate problems that arose while establishing governing bodies

These aims are discussed together because the problems identified are linked to the setting up of governing bodies.

Generally, the process of establishing school governing bodies seems to have been smooth except for the parent elections.

i) Parent participation
Problems centre on poor attendance of parents and their reluctance to stand for election. These are cause for concern because the Schools Act requires democratic participation of all stakeholders in the school community. Parents' reluctance to participate in elections constrains the potential of an important role-player. Already, some parents are beginning to realise the important role they can play in transforming schools into microcosms of a democratic society. Others are now regretting their reluctance to serve on democratically

elected school governing bodies and are belatedly agitating for inclusion (Daily News, 20 November 1997).

ii) Previous experience

The survey and the case studies indicate that experience on previous school governance structures has helped to facilitate the process of establishing governing bodies at some schools. It would appear that most parents elected, particularly at ex-HoA and ex-HoD schools, had previously been members of governance structures. Although this is often viewed as an advantage by new school governing bodies, there is the possibility of retaining a particular mind-set, entrenching the old order and impeding transformation at these schools.

iii) Training

Superintendents instructed by the DoE provide training and guidance about the election of various stakeholders for principals, particularly in the urban areas. They therefore play an indirect role in facilitating democratic school governance. However, the training or guidance should be extended to all schools, especially those in rural areas. The ex-KDEC and ex-DET school governing bodies indicated an urgent need for capacity building for all components and identified a variety of areas ranging from budgeting to meeting procedure. Schools in the other three departments were more selective about which components required capacity building and in which area. The consensus was that non-educator and learner representatives would have much to gain by attending departmental workshops. Some schools have begun to establish 'umbrella associations' of school governing bodies for sharing information, sharing expertise and lobbying from a position of strength.

iv) Access to information

Information sharing by the DoE on current issues such as budget cuts, educator redeployment and staff appointments was requested and should be extended to all governing bodies. One principal referred to the lack of information when he described the dilemma faced by many school managers:

> *In terms of communication with the department, there seems to be a problem. Look, I sit here with six staff members who have resigned and will be leaving at the end of the year. I have telephoned the Department asking them what is our position in terms of appointing new staff. Nobody can answer. They tell me that they have to put appointments on hold for some time. They tell me about redeployment. When I ask them about it nobody can answer.*

v) Communication lines

There is also a lack of communication between governing bodies and the Department. Indeed, the only line of communication is via the principal. This places principals in an invidious position with claims from members of the governing body that they are deliberately withholding information. It is important that documentary information regarding the above needs reaches the correct people timeously. It was discovered that

certain ex-HoA, ex-HoD and ex-HoR governing bodies had received documented guidelines and information brochures, but these were either late in arriving at some schools or non-existent at others.

vi) Roles and functions
Although principals and educator representatives seem to be conversant with their overall functions, confusion exists regarding the roles of parents, non-educators and learners. This demonstrates the need for clarification of roles and for capacity building.

Aim 4: To evaluate the immediate/short term impact and effectiveness of governing body structures in public schools

The establishment of school governing bodies has heightened public awareness of educational issues, particularly schooling. The main points of realisation are:

- Education of learners is now the joint responsibility of all stakeholders in the school community.
- The community at large, and parents in particular, have a role to play in the education of children.
- Management and maintenance of the school is now the responsibility of the governing body and not that of the principal alone.
- Schools have become 'community property' and principals can no longer claim to 'own' the school.
- Governing bodies have to raise funds to finance new projects, particularly in times of state cutbacks in funding.
- Governing bodies are entrusted with certain powers and are accountable to the school community.
- All stakeholders on the governing body, i.e. educators, non-educators and learners, have a share in decision-making.

While some governing bodies have taken to their tasks with enthusiasm, others seem to be disadvantaged by a lack of financial and material resources, especially in the less affluent communities. The danger exists that a dual public school system will evolve into schools that have and schools that do not, such as self-managed or departmentally managed schools. The fact that daily and national newspapers now highlight many governing body issues verifies public concern surrounding school governing bodies.

School governing bodies, despite all the teething problems, are now established and becoming functional. Problems are being identified for 'attention' and valuable lessons learnt.

- The introduction of a new governance system in schools takes time. Principals have bemoaned the time constraints under which they have had to work and the manner in which the entire operation has been 'rushed'. In particular, having to draft and adopt a constitution within ninety days is proving to be difficult. This is compounded by the lack of expertise of governing body members and the late receipt of suitable guidelines.
- Serving on a governing body is a daunting task for many of the representatives. That they are coping is proof of their enthusiasm and sense of duty, irrespective of whether they are capable or not. But the call for capacity building has come from all the components interviewed and surveyed. Had adequate training and guidance been given immediately after elections, the progress of governing bodies might have been easier.
- Superintendents of education should be entrusted with the task of holding workshops to enable capacity building within their circuits. Superintendents are no longer responsible for evaluating educators and therefore have time for training.
- In addition, the authoritarian interference of some superintendents in school governing body matters needs urgent attention if the governing body is to retain its credibility as an independent and democratic governance structure.
- Better lines of communication and timeous information about current and contentious issues in schooling are needed and this issue should be addressed by the KZNDEC as matter of urgency.
- Parents are not fully informed about the functions of the governing body. A brochure describing the process of establishing governing bodies should be published by the Department and distributed to schools. This would have a greater impact than newspaper reports or explanations given at public meetings.
- In the 'rush' to establish new school structures, cognisance must be taken of the following:
    i) Culture, language and educational differences of participating members, because these may impede proceedings.
    ii) The isolated location of some schools and distances that have to be traveled may hamper effective participation of some governing body members.
    iii) In rural and urban areas both parents often work away from home and 'guardians' do not have full authority to make decisions on issues such as school fee increases.
    iv) There is apathy among parents and reluctance to attend school meetings.

School governing bodies were established following the promulgation of the Schools Act. With the present financial constraints on provincial budgets, governing bodies face a difficult future and will be held accountable by the local school community for any mishaps or neglect of duty. The first few months of their existence could have been made less problematic if schools had received adequate information about monetary allocations to their schools. As it is, governing bodies are despondent about receiving any future financial support from the Department. Even in the absence of this support, the onus is on

the provincial Department to assist in solving teething problems, to nurture and support democratic school governance and gain the confidence of the school community.

Although this study was limited to KwaZulu-Natal, it is likely that similar problems and experiences are emerging in public schools across South Africa.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

African National Congress (ANC). 1994. The Reconstruction and Development Programme. Johannesburg: Umanyano.

African National Congress (ANC). 1995. A policy framework for education and training. Manzini: Macmillan Boleswa.

Buckland, P. and Hofmeyr, J. 1993. Education governance in South Africa. (Resource Document Series). Johannesburg: Education Policy and System Change Unit (EDUPOL), Urban Foundation.

Coombe, C. and Godden, J. (eds.). 1996. Local/district governance in education: lessons for South Africa. Johannesburg: Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management (CEPD).

Department of Education (DoE). 1995a. Draft education white paper on the organisation, governance and funding of schools. Pretoria: DoE.

Department of Education (DoE). 1995b. Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools. Pretoria: DoE.

Department of Education (DoE). 1995c. White paper on education and training: first steps to develop a new system. Pretoria: DoE.

Department of Education (DoE). 1996. South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996).

Department of National Education (DNE). 1963. Coloured Persons Education Act (No. 47 of 1963).

Department of National Education (DNE). 1965. Indian Education Act (No. 61 of 1965).

Department of National Education (DNE). 1979. Education and Training Act (No. 90 of 1979).

Department of National Education (DNE). 1991. Education Renewal Strategy (ERS). Discussion document. Pretoria: University of South Africa (UNISA).

Department of National Education (DNE). 1992. Education Renewal Strategy (ERS): management solutions for education in South Africa. Pretoria: University of South Africa (UNISA).

Education Policy Unit (Natal). 1993. 'Towards a new structure of governance of schooling'. Unpublished paper presented at CEPD policy workshop.

House of Assembly. 1986. Private Schools Act (No. 104 of 1986).

House of Assembly. 1988. Education Affairs Act (No. 70 of 1988).

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC). 1996. School Education Act (No. 3 of 1996).

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC). 1997. A snapshot of basic education in KwaZulu-Natal. Chart prepared by KZNDEC Education Management Information Services (EMIS) in association with The Education Foundation.

Metcalfe, M. and Rule, P. 1992. Build your PTSA: a manual for organising parent-teacher-student associations. Johannesburg: NECC/SACHED Trust.

Natal-KwaZulu Education Working Group. 1992. Report of the Natal-KwaZulu Education Working Group.

National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC). 1992. National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), governance and administration: report of the NEPI Governance and Administration Research Group. Cape Town: Oxford University Press/NECC.

Sithole, S. 1994. *Parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs): present state and future prospects*, Education Monitor, 5(1):1-8.

Verwey, C.T. and Munzhedzi, E.M. 1994. Education in KwaZulu-Natal: data, indicators and scenarios. Halfway House: Centre for Policy Information, Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Appendix A

Interview guideline for school visits

Interview at School
Parents

Name of School: .....
Learner Enrolment: .....

1. Has the new governing body been established in accordance with departmental instruction? If not, why has it not been established?
2. What problems did you encounter in electing the school governing body and how were they overcome?
3. Do you feel that there were some factors that made establishing the governing body easier at this school?
4. How do you view the role of the governing bodies?
5. Do you feel that the parent component has a meaningful role to play on the school governing body?
6. Do you feel that governing body members require training about their roles on the governing body? Has any training been done? If so, by whom and what areas were covered? If not, in which areas do you think training is needed?
7. Has the new governing body met and elected office bearers?
8. Has a new constitution been adopted?
9. Has a code of conduct been adopted for learners?
10. Are minutes kept and do you receive a copy?
11. How do parents get to know about decisions taken at governing body level?
12. Can you supply a breakdown of the parent component of the governing body

	Gender	Race*	Unemployed/Self-employed/	Level of Education
Parent	M/F	W/B/I/C	Employed	P/S/C/D/PG**
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
Co-opted				
1				
2				

*Race classification is required only for measuring progress towards greater heterogeneity.
**P= Primary Education; S= Secondary Education; C= Certificate; D= Degree; PG= Post Graduate

14. Would you like to make any comments or recommendations about the new governing bodies?

Interview at School
Educators

Name of School: .....
Educators: .....

1. Has the new governing body been established in accordance with departmental instruction? If not, why has it not been established?
2. How were representatives of educators elected to the governing body?
3. What problems did you encounter in electing a school governing body and how were they overcome?
4. Do you feel that there were some factors that made establishing the governing body easier?
5. How do you view your role on the governing body?
6. What are the perceptions of educators with regard to your role on the school governing body?
7. Do you feel that educators are adequately represented to participate effectively in decision-making on the school governing body?
8. Do you feel that governing body members require training about their roles on the governing body? Has any training been done? If so, by whom? Which areas were covered? If not, in which areas do you think training is needed?
9. Has the governing body met and elected office bearers?
10. Has a constitution been adopted?
11. Has a code of conduct been adopted for learners?
12. Are minutes kept and do you receive copies?
13. How do educators get to know about decisions taken at school governing body level?
14. Can you supply a detailed breakdown of the educator component of the governing body:

	Male	Female	Ethnic Group*	Position at school
Educators				
1				
2				

*Race classification is required only for measuring progress towards greater heterogeneity.

15. Would you like to make any comments or recommendations with regard to the new governing bodies?

Interview at School
Non-Educators

Name of School:
Non-educators:

1. Has the new governing body been established in accordance with departmental instruction? If not, why has it not been established?
2. How was the election of the non-educator representative conducted?
3. What problems did you encounter in electing a school governing body and how were they overcome?
4. Do you feel that there were some factors that made establishing the governing body easier at this school?
5. How do you view your role as a non-educator, on the school governing body?
6. Do you feel that governing body members require training about their roles on the governing body? Has any training been done? If so, by whom? If not, in which areas do you think training is needed?
7. Has the new governing body met and elected office-bearers?
8. Has a constitution been adopted?
9. Are minutes kept and do you receive a copy?
10. How do non-educators get to know about decisions taken by the governing body?
11. Can you supply the following details:

	Male	Female	Race*	Occupation/Position at school
Non-educator				
1				

* Race classification is required only for measuring progress towards greater heterogeneity.

12. Would you like to make any comments or recommendations with regard to the new governing bodies?

Interview at School
Learners

Name of School: .....
Learner Enrolment: .....

1. Has the new governing body been established in accordance with departmental instruction? If not, why has it not been established?
2. How were learner representatives elected?
3. What problems were encountered in electing learner representatives to the school governing bodies and how were they overcome?
4. In your view, what factors made establishing the governing body easier at this school?
5. How do you view your role on the governing body?
6. How do learners view the role of a learner representative on the school governing body?
7. Do you feel that the learner component is adequately represented to play a meaningful role on the school governing body?
8. Do you feel that governing body members require training about their roles on the governing body? Has any training been done? If so, by whom? If not, in which areas do you think training is needed?
9. Has the school governing body met and elected office bearers?
10. Has a code of conduct been adopted for learners?
11. Is the new code of conduct acceptable to learners?
12. Are minutes kept and do you receive copies?
13. How do learners get to know about decisions taken at school governing body level?
14. Can you supply a breakdown of the learner component of the governing body:

	Male	Female	Race*	Grade	Age
Learner					
1					
2					

*Race classification is required only for measuring progress towards greater heterogeneity

15. Would you like to make any comments or recommendations with regard to the new governing bodies?

Interview at School
Principal

Name of School .....
Phone No .....
Principal's Name .....
Learner Enrolment .....
Educators .....
Non-Educators .....

1. Has the new governing body been established in accordance with departmental instruction? If not, why has it not been established?
2. How were the various stakeholders elected to the governing body?
3. What problems were encountered in establishing the governing body and how were they overcome?
4. Were there some factors that made establishing the governing body easier at this school?
5. How do you view your role on the governing body?

6. Do governing body members require training or support about their roles? Has any training been done? If so, by whom? Which areas were covered? If not, in which areas is training needed?
7. Has the new governing body met and elected office bearers?
8. Has a constitution been adopted?
9. Has a code of conduct been adopted for learners?
10. Are minutes of governing body meetings kept and are they available for perusal?
11. Would you like to make comments or recommendations with regard to the new governing bodies?

Appendix B

Sample of letter sent to circuit Superintendents of Education and Management

.....
.....
.....
.....

28 August 1997

Dear Sir

Permission to conduct research at schools within the ..... Circuit

The Education Policy Unit (EPU) is conducting research about the establishing of Governing Bodies of public schools in South Africa. In particular, we are interested to know whether they are operational, the composition of their members and the extent to which capacity building programmes have begun. This research comprises case studies of about 14 schools in the Durban South region. In addition, we will be distributing a questionnaire to 250 schools throughout the province.

We are formally requesting permission to conduct case studies of schools in your region and under your authority. The affected schools will be:

I am the research co-ordinator, and two research assistants, Mrs Mbali Dlamini and Mr Gregory McPherson, will be collecting the data. The research assistants are both mature M Ed students who have held management positions in institutions of KZNDEC. As with previous research reports, the names of the schools and the interviewees will not be published.

I would appreciate your agreement and support by return fax because we are in some urgency to collect all the research data by the end of September.
I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely
Jenni Karlsson
Acting Director

Appendix C

Survey questionnaire sent to schools in KwaZulu-Natal

The Principal
Survey Questionnaire

The Education Policy Unit, located at the University of Natal (Durban), is conducting a research study to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the implementation of South African Schools Act (1996) regarding the setting up of democratic governing bodies. The study includes monitoring the progress of the school governance capacity building programme in public schools in KZNDEC. Permission has been obtained from Dr S Shabalala, Superintendent General of KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture, to approach schools in the province, and to enlist their assistance and co-operation in providing the necessary data for the study.

The survey questionnaire requires information about the establishment of a democratic governing body at your school. Your responses are very important for the success of this project.

The information given in answer to the questionnaire will be treated with strict confidence. Names of schools and governing body representatives are requested for purposes of follow-up work only. Only the researchers will have access to this information.

It may take about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you require more information about this study, contact Mbali Dlamini or Mac McPherson at (031) 2602641.

Your co-operation in completing this questionnaire, and thereby assisting with the research study, will be greatly appreciated.

---

1. Please respond to these questions by making a cross on the answer of your choice.

1.1 Has a school governing body been established, at this school in accordance with the South African Schools Act (1996)?

Yes	No

1.1.1 If yes, when?

/ /

1.2 Were these procedures followed when the school governing body was elected:

1.2.1 The principal acted as the electoral officer

Yes	No

1.2.2 Parents were notified 3 weeks before the election meeting

Yes	No

1.2.3 Separate election meetings were held for
Parents

Yes	No

Educators

Yes	No

Non-educators

Yes	No

Learners

Yes	No

2. Has a Learner Representative Council been established?

Yes	No

How many times have they met?

0 times	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6-10 times

3. Please supply the following information about the governing body:

Parent Rep.	**Gender**	**Race***	**Employed**	**Highest level of education**
(No names required)	(Male/ female)	(W/B/I/C)	(Yes/No)	(Prim./Sec./Certificate/ Diploma/Degree/Post Grad.)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Educator Rep.	**Gender**	**Rank**		**No. of years as teacher**
1				
2				

Non-educator	**Gender**	**Race***		**Occupation/Post**
1				

Learner Rep.	**Gender**	**Grade**	**Age**	
1				
2				

***Race classification is required only to measure trends in redress and affirmative action**

4. Which of these are functions of the governing body?

4.1 Leadership

Yes	No

4.2 Administration

Yes	No

4.3 Budgeting

Yes	No

4.4 Planning

Yes	No

4.5 Policy-making

Yes	No

4.6 Rubber stamping decisions

Yes	No

4.7 Consensus building

Yes	No

5. 5.1 Has a meeting of the school governing body been held?

Yes	No

5.2 If yes, can you list some of the main issues discussed.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.3 Has a constitution been adopted?

Yes	No

5.4 Has a code of conduct been adopted?

Yes	No

5.5 Has a language policy been adopted?

Yes	No

6. Has a governing body capacity building programme started at your school?

Yes	No

6.1 If yes, which areas were covered?
Election procedure

Yes	No

Meeting procedure

Yes	No

Keeping records, especially minutes

Yes	No

Duties of office bearers

Yes	No

6.2 If no, which of these areas would you like to see covered?
Election procedure

Yes	No

Meeting procedure

Yes	No

Keeping records, especially minutes

Yes	No

Duties of office bearers

Yes	No

Thank you for the thought, time and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire. It will be appreciated if the questionnaire can be mailed, as soon as possible, to the following address:

University of Natal (Durban)
Education Policy Unit
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001

Appendix D

Schedule of Schools for Case Studies

School	**Former Department**
Pinetown Boys Secondary	House of Assembly
Pitlochry Primary	House of Assembly
Warner Beach Senior Primary	House of Assembly
Asoka Secondary	House of Delegates
Astra Primary	House of Delegates
Kaliminee Primary	House of Delegates
AJ Mwelase Secondary	Department of Education and Training
Christopher Nxumalo Primary	Department of Education and Training
St Wendolins Primary	Department of Education and Training
Mariannridge Primary	House of Representatives
Mariannridge Secondary	House of Representatives
Adams Primary	KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture
Qwebezela Primary	KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture
Siyabonga Secondary	KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture
Vukusakhe Secondary	KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC:	African National Congress
APEK:	Association of Professional Educators in KwaZulu-Natal
DEC:	Department of Education and Culture
DET:	Department of Education and Training
DNE:	Department of National Education
DOE:	Department of Education
EDUPOL:	Education Policy and System Change Unit
HOA:	House of Assembly
HOD:	House of Delegates
HOR:	House of Representatives
HSRC:	Human Sciences Research Council
KDEC:	KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture
LRC:	Learner Representative Council
MEC:	Member of the Executive Committee
NECC:	National Education Co-ordination Committee
NED:	Natal Education Department
NEPI:	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO:	Non-government organisation
PTA:	Parent-Teacher Association
PTSA:	Parent-Teacher-Student Association
SACHED:	South African Council for Higher Education
SADTU:	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SRC:	Student Representative Council
UNISA:	University of South Africa

Published by the Education Policy Unit
University of Natal
Durban 4041
South Africa
Tel: (031) 260-2607
Fax: (031) 260-2118
Email: sharman@mtb.und.ac.za
Copyright ©1998: Education Policy Unit
ISBN: 1-86840-269-X